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Betsy Ross  
and the  
United States Flag



BY OLIVER RANDOLPH PARRY



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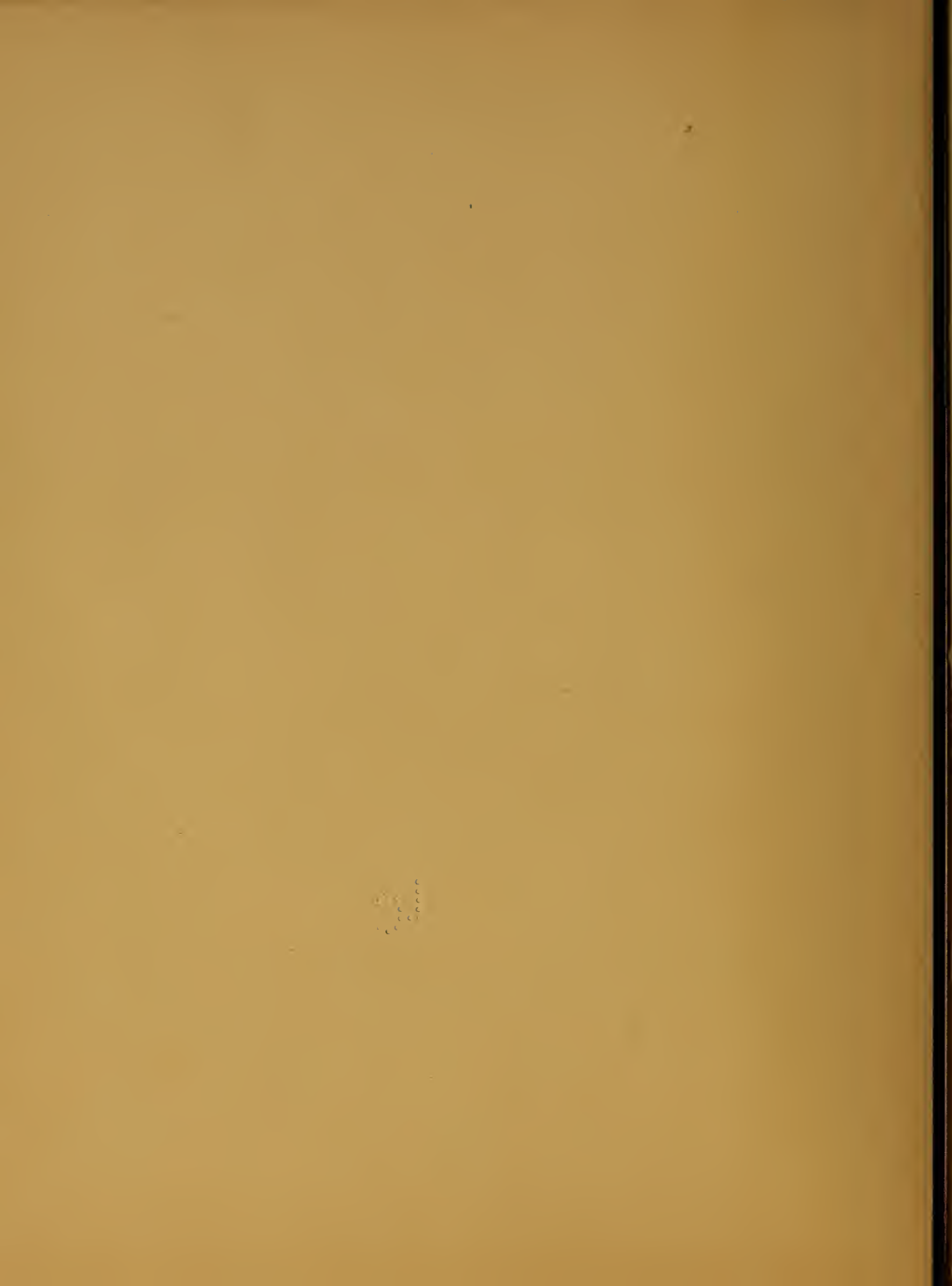


**Betsy Ross**  
**and the**  
**United States Flag**



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**BY OLIVER RANDOLPH PARRY**



BETSY ROSS  
... AND THE ...  
UNITED STATES FLAG

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**Philadelphia Woman Maker of the First  
Standard.**

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A Paper Read Before The Bucks County Historical  
Society, at Doylestown, Pa., January 19, 1909,  
by Oliver Randolph Parry, of Bucks  
County and Philadelphia.

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# BETSY ROSS AND THE UNITED STATES FLAG

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Fellow members of the Bucks County Historical Society, and guests:

In connection with this subject, I take pleasure in presenting to the Bucks County Historical Society considerable data furnished me by certain descendants of Betsy Ross; the collateral lines of said family and others as well as the only piece of original flooring from the front room, or store, of the Betsy Ross house, No. 239 (old No. 89) Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa., extant. The authenticity of which is shown and established by the accompanying sworn affidavit of Charles M. Wallington, an aged and reputable citizen, of 543 West street, Camden, N. J., who personally procured the board from the owner of the flag house and which I will now read.

Affidavit.

"UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

County of Philadelphia, ss.

Be it known, That on the day of the date hereof, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, residing in the city of Philadelphia, personally appeared Chas. M. Wallington, residing at 543 West street, in the city of Camden, and State of New Jersey, who being duly sworn, according to law, did depose and say that—

I, Chas. M. Wallington, hereby swear that I personally obtained from Mr. Philip Mund, deceased, then owner of the property No. 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, known as the Betsy Ross Flag-house, Monday, November 7, 1881, the only piece of original boards composing the flooring of the front room of shop of said Flag house not consumed for kindling or otherwise destroyed.

I recently presented board to Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq., of New Hope (formerly Coryell's Ferry), Bucks county, Pa. I hereby certify that the above mentioned piece of board is the same board mentioned in the article published by The Philadelphia Press in issue of Sunday, Sept. 11, 1887. I also certify that Mrs. Amelia Mund, wife of said above, Philip Mund, assured me that this was the only piece of the original boards in the hands of anyone. I also certify to this because of a reporter's erroneous statement that others had visited the house for pieces of the original flooring.

Sworn and subscribed before me this 2d day of March, A. D. 1908.

Chas. H. Dougherty, Notary Public.  
Com. expires May 1st, 1909.

Chas. M. Wallington.  
543 West Street,  
Camden, N. J.

I will read in part a letter from the donor of the board bearing on this subject, and a copy of the article referred to as

having appeared in The Philadelphia Press of Sept. 11th, 1887.

Philadelphia, Feb. 20, 1908.

"Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

Dear Sir:—

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the only original remaining part of the board, or relic, from the front room (the store or shop) of Betsy Ross, at No. 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, where the first American flag was made, as told in communication, signed "Kamden" (Chas. M. Wallington) in "Penn's" columns of "The Evening Bulletin," Philadelphia, Saturday, January 18, 1908. Some time in 1887 another Philadelphia newspaper published an article about the Old Flag House in which my name was mentioned and therefore more directly connected me with the possession of the old board. I regret the loss of the article.

Respectfully yours,

Chas. M. Wallington

Philadelphia correspondent

Commercial and Financial World of

New York City

543 West Street,

Camden, N. J.

To

Oliver Randolph Parry,  
New Hope, Bucks county, Pa."

From "Penn's" columns, "The Evening Bulletin," Philadelphia Saturday January 18, 1908, we have—

"In reply to Mr. Henry C. Frey, I would state that the late Philip Mund, who was part proprietor of "Mund and Albrecht's Farm," on the way from the railroad station to Scheutzen Park, in the Centennial year started a lager beer saloon at 239 Arch street, now known as "the original Flag House" probably in the latter part of 1876, or early part of 1877.

"Years before that time he occupied it as a tailor shop. The original doorway was on the east side of the house, communicating with entry way, in which was a half door, which opened into Betsy Ross' shop, which subsequently became Mr. Mund's saloon.

"The original floor boards of this room, which were composed of heavy pine wood six and three quarter inches wide and one and one quarter inches thick, were replaced by the present boards during the week of October 31, 1881, and the lumber was piled in the yard for kindling wood purposes. Mr. Mund furnished me with a saw, by which I obtained a piece of one of the original boards, which I made into a table top and now have framed, hanging in my room.

"One of the Mund boys, Charles P. Mund, or his brother, who was accidentally electrocuted at Atlantic City, uncovered the tiles in the fireplace in the room where the first American flag was made. One, or both of them found a number of old papers in the loft, which a German servant girl was allowed to kindle fires with; and they also found, embedded in the masonry in the cellar, an old broken hatchet or tool, which Mrs. Mund sold for \$25 to the proprietor of a museum somewhere in the New England States. Mrs. Mund, after her husband's death, carried on the saloon. I think she died in the house, which came into the possession of an only son, Charles P. Mund, who embarked in business as a manufacturer of the "Betsy Ross" brand of cigars.

Kamden

(CHAS. M. WALLINGTON.)"

I will also read from other letters to me from Mr. Wallington as follows:

Camden, N. J., Feb. 20, 1908.

Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

Dear Sir:—

The following is a verbatim copy of an article which was published by "The Philadelphia Press," Sunday September 11, 1887, in which mention is made of "one gentleman had a board made into a table and draped it with the American flag."

The table was too top heavy to maintain its equilibrium without wab-

bling, so I made a frame for it of cedar wool derived from old cigar boxes, which I varnished. The original frame is that which I present to you. In itself no importance can be attached to it—but the piece of old floor board of the shop of Betsy Ross—(front room on ground floor) at 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, should be appreciated as of enduring value.

Respectfully yours,

CHAS. M. WALLINGTON.

("Kamden" of communications to "Penn" of "The Evening Bulletin" of Philadelphia)

Philadelphia Correspondent, "Commercial and Financial World" of New York City, 543 West street, Camden, N. J.

(From "The Philadelphia Press," Sunday, September 11, 1887)

#### Birth of The Flag.

The House in Which the First American Ensign Was Made  
A Relic of Patriotic Days.

Nearly Hidden Between Great Factories, It Remains in Almost Its Original Condition, Although it is now used as a Beer Saloon.

On Arch Street, below Third, stands a little old building, two stories and a half high, bearing a sign which informs the passerby that within the house was made the first American flag and in these days he can buy beer or liquor there.

Early in 1777 a committee appointed by the Continental Congress to select a design for a national flag, went with General Washington to the little shop of Mrs. Elizabeth Ross, at 239 Arch street, to have their ideas embodied in bunting. Mrs. Ross was a milliner whose principal business was among the Quaker ladies, and in the projecting window were hung the correct forms of the brown and drab bonnets, about whose make-up the women of the Friends' Society were, and are as particular, as the lady who now stops

one's view at the theatre. General Washington sketched on a scrap of paper the design agreed upon. There were thirteen stripes of alternate white and red, and in the blue union were to be thirteen white stars arranged in a circle. There is a tradition that General Washington ordered that the stars have six points, and that Mrs. Ross argued that the stars in the sky seemed to have only five points. She won the day by showing her visitors how a star with five points could be made with one clip of her scissors. The flag was made in her little back room, and on June 14 of the same year, Congress adopted the design and the national banner.

#### THE BUILDING UNCHANGED.

The building was changed but little since then.

A large tree which stood in front of it during the Revolution, survived until 1876, when it became dangerous and was cut down. But the house stands as it then did. Even Mrs. Ross' show window is preserved, and the wooden shutters on the second story windows, and the dormer window in the sharply sloping roof, are the same that looked down on Arch street a hundred years ago.

The barroom would even now be recognized as Mrs. Ross' shop if one of that committee could revisit it. Passing from this room through a narrow entry and up two steps, one enters Mrs. Ross' work room, where, without doubt, the flag was cut out and sewed together. It is even now a queer old room. On its furthest end is the fireplace, now covered with wall paper, but showing at the top a row of the blue and white tiles which once surrounded it. Built in one corner is a three-cornered wooden cupboard. The very locks and knobs on the doors are of the pattern of the last century. The stairways of this house are all winding and very narrow. That leading to

the cellar is very steep. The attic is still floored with the puncheon boards which once were the only flooring in the house, an inch thick and eighteen inches wide.

The only new thing about the whole structure is a back kitchen built within the last few years.

#### ITS LATER HISTORY.

Mrs. Amelia Mund, a comely German widow, who keeps the tavern, and owns the property, told what she knew of the history of the building since the time of Mrs. Ross. "It was occupied as a tailor's shop for many years, and my husband bought it over forty-five years ago. Neither he nor I would allow anything to be changed, unless an absolute necessity to keep the building from going to pieces. It is strong and well built and has needed very little repairing. When the floor of what was the shop was taken up some years ago, the original floor was taken away, as it could not be kept from falling into the cellar. People came from long distances to get pieces of it as relics, and one gentleman (Chas. M. Wallington) had a board made into a table and draped it with the American flag. The house, until two or three weeks ago, never had a sign to tell people that the first American flag was made here, but I thought people ought to know. Anyway I have had no end of visitors to inquire about the old house.

Not many of them were Philadelphians for they don't seem to care about the relics of the Revolution, nowadays, but a great many Western people and visitors to the city have come to this house and taken as much interest in it as they did in Independence Hall.

#### PLANS FOR PRESERVATION.

"I hope President Cleveland will come here when he is at the Constitutional Centennial city. Do you think he would? When the flag's birthday celebration was held in 1877, I had for-

gotten all about decorating the house, and didn't even show a flag and the parade went right by the house, and the newspapers went for me about it, too. You shall see how I will decorate my house during the celebration this fall."

On either side of 239 are tall buildings used for manufacturing purposes, and the space this relic of history occupies is becoming too valuable for it to stay there much longer. Mrs. Mund states that she wishes the Historical Society would buy the building and move it out to the park beside William Penn's Letitia Street house. Several ladies have already become interested in this project and the Historical Society is said to have it under consideration."

There was also another account mentioning Mr. Wallington's name in this connection, which appeared in "The Inquirer" or other Philadelphia paper, at about this date, but which he has so far been unable to find, as per following letter:—

Camden, N. J., Friday, Feb. 23, 1903.  
"Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

Dear Sir:—

I wrote you yesterday a postal card, on which I stated my inability to see Charles Dougherty, Notary Public, Juniper above Market street, and my object in going to the Ridgway Branch of the Philadelphia library, to search the files of "The Inquirer" of Philadelphia. I examined, but cannot say carefully, the papers published in September and October, 1887. The early numbers of "The Inquirer" are kept in book form at the library. I have been looking over some of my old papers this morning, at home, in order to find, if possible, some clue to the date of publication of an article that contained my name in connection with the ownership of the piece of original flooring of the old Flag House (No. 239 Arch Street, Phila.) which I lately



presented to the Bucks County Historical Society through you. I have not, so far, found anything to strengthen my recollection of the past. On Monday next I shall see Mr. Dougherty, Notary Public, and swear to matter contained in an affidavit which I have prepared.

Respectfully yours,

CHAS M. WALLINGTON,  
"Philadelphia Correspondent 'Commercial & Financial World' of New York City, 543 West street, Camden, N. J."

I will also read a letter from Mr. Wallington dated February 21, 1908, which may be of interest.

"Phila., Friday, Feb., 21, 1908.

"Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.

Dear Sir:—

"In reply to your queries relative to the date of the old wood cuts, which, on September, 1881, I pasted on a piece of flooring (lately presented to you) taken from the old Flag House, 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa., and the possibility of other samples being in existence, I would say that the cuts were probably derived from the same source, Harper's Magazine, of 1880, or years before that period. I speak to the best of my recollection.

"That I was the possessor of the only piece of the original board of the house, I had the assurance of Mrs. Mund.

"She was the widow of the late Philip Mund, who had owned the property, where he carried on the tailoring business for many years and during the 70's converted into a lager beer saloon.

"Mrs. Mund told me that all of the wood, except that which I had made into the table top, had been used for kindling. The reporter in his article, published by 'The Philadelphia Press,' Sunday September 11, 1887, either elaborated on people having made visits to the house to obtain

pieces of boards, to make a more interesting story, or else he misunderstood Mrs. Mund, who spoke English but not fluently.

"It is worthy of special note, however, that the reporter did not state that any one else had procured even a small piece.

"After the article appeared Mrs. Mund told me that I was sole possessor of any part of the wood, which I saw taken up when the new floor was laid.

Respectfully yours,

CHARLES M. WALLINGTON,  
"Philadelphia Correspondent 'Commercial & Financial World' of New York City, 543 West street, Camden, N. J."

On September 12, 1908, this piece of flooring was exhibited at a special meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution, held at the residence of Major T. Worcester Worrell in Frankford, Pa., at which several hundred direct descendants of soldiers of The American Revolution were present and at which time the writer being called upon, made some remarks in connection with this relic.

"The Philadelphia Telegraph" of September 12, 1908, noticed this meeting in the following article:

"WHERE BETSY ROSS TROD."

"Original Flag House Flooring Viewed by Daughters of the Revolution."

"The stately old mansion No. 4356 Tacony street, Frankford, the residence of Major T. Worcester Worrell, principal of the Bridesburg Public School, will be the mecca this afternoon of over a hundred direct descendants of soldiers of the American Revolution, who will call to examine a piece of the original flooring of the room in which Betsy Ross made the American first flag.

"Flag house Chapter Daughters of American Revolution, of which Mrs. T. Worcester Worrell, is the Regent, will be present in a body at the house,

and pay their respects to the piece of wood, that to patriotic minds, means so much.

"The section of flooring, the authenticity of which is assured by ample records, is the property of Mr. Oliver Randolph Parry, and will be presented by him to the Bucks County Historical Society.

"In no more appropriate place could the relic be exhibited than in the residence of Major and Mrs. Worrell, as the roomy old mansion is filled with Colonial mementoes as well as memories."

I will also read in part from "The Record" of the same date as follows:—

"BETSY ROSS WALKED ON IT."

"Daughters of American Revolution Inspect Prized Relic."

"Part of the original flooring of the room in which Betsy Ross is said to have made the first American flag was on exhibition yesterday, to the Daughters of the American Revolution, in the stately old mansion of Major T. Worcester Worrell, Principal of the Bridesburg Public School. Mrs. Worrell, who is regent of the Flag House Chapter of the Daughters entertained er chapter royally in the roomy old mansion, so filled with Colonial mementos.

That this portion of flooring, which is the property of Oliver Randolph Parry, and will be presented by him to the Bucks County Historical Society, is an authentic specimen, is vouched for by many records now in possession of Mr. Parry."

Other Philadelphia papers, copies of which the writer did not procure also contain notices.

You will observe historical cuts pasted on this interesting relic, one of which shows the house during the occupancy of Mr. Mund who was the owner of the premises for a long time and was succeeded by his widow.

There is also another identical cut of

this house in the possession of, and hanging upon the walls of General George Meade, Post No.2, of the Grand Army of the Republic, in the Odd Fellows' Temple, Philadelphia, Pa., as stated in a letter of March 3, 1908, from Mr. C. M. Wallington to me as follows:—

Camden, Tuesday night,

March 3, 1908.

"Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

"Dear Sir:—

"At the headquarters of the Meade Grand Army Post, Odd Fellows' Temple, Broad and Cherry streets, there is a photograph of the Old Flag House. It shows the old tree at the front, and upon a sign is:

"'G. Franke, Tailor.'

"There is nothing to indicate its age.

"Whether Mr. Mund succeeded Franke, I do not know.

"I tried to get at the old Flag House to-day—a picture of Betsy Ross' grave in Mt. Moriah Cemetery—but could not.

"A picture of the grave can be obtained at Newell & Sons photographic studio, on the north side of Arch street, below Seventh,

"Respectfully yours,

"CHAS. M. WALLINGTON.

543 West street, Camden, N. J."

This certainly would indicate that as back as several generations ago (and previous to the occupancy of the Munds) the popular belief was that in this house of Betsy Ross, previously noted, was made the first adopted flag of the United States.

The inscription over the pew of Betsy Ross in Christ Church, Philadelphia, also bears out this belief, and I will read another letter from Mr. Wallington in this connection as follows:—

Camden, N. J., Wed., Feb. 26, 1908.

"Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

"Dear Sir:—

"I entered Old Christ Church yesterday and sought the pew of Betsy Ross."

It is number 12, on the north side of the middle seats, near pulpit. The pew will comfortably seat two persons, and is less than half the length of those in general in the middle of the church on account of a long wooden pillar, to which is affixed a silk flag about three feet long, with stick. The flag is somewhat soiled and dusty from its almost seventeen years quietude in its fixed position. But what struck me most forcibly, was its modern design in the arrangement and number of stars in the blue union. The design should have been that which was chosen by the Committee of the Continental Congress, and which Betsy Ross made.

"On the wooden columns is a large brass plate, ten inches long and five inches wide, upon which is a resemblance of the original flag; under which is engraved:

"Here Worshipped  
Mrs. Elizabeth Ross  
Who under the Directions  
of a Committee of  
Continental Congress  
Composed of  
George Washington  
Robert Morris  
and  
George Ross  
Was the Maker of the  
First American Flag  
1777."

"There are two cards attached to the stick of the flag, upon which the writing is pale, but discernable.

"Upon one:

"In Honor of Elizabeth Claypole  
Who Made the

First American Flag  
(Stars and Stripes)  
And Who At One Time  
Occupied This Pew  
Placed Here Flag Day  
June 14, 1891

By A Member of the  
Daughters of the American Revolution."

"Upon the second was written:

"Maiden Name  
Elizabeth Griscome  
First Husband  
John Ross  
Second Husband  
— Ashburn  
Third Husband  
— Claypole

She Was A Widow of John Ross  
When She Made the Flag  
She Was Quite Young  
At the Time."

"Yours,

"CHAS. M. WALLINGTON,

"Philadelphia Correspondent 'Commercial & Financial World' of New York City, 543 West street, Camden, N. J."

There is also much evidence at hand which points to the belief we all have had, and I might say, been taught in schools, and through word of mouth of our progenitors, and unless we disbelieve all this, and credit them with being grossly mistaken or untruthful, it would seem as though we must accept the belief that Betsy Ross did make the first adopted flag of the United States, especially as no one has been able to state definitely who else did make it, and in just what building the same was first designed and made. Until recent years, when a few have held a different opinion, no doubt was apparently expressed as to any other maker of our flag than Betsy Ross, and of its birth place, in what is now 239 Arch street, in the city of Philadelphia.

While the writer believes the burden of settling the question, if Betsy Ross did not make the first United States flag, rests on the ability of those who doubt the same, proving who did and where, rather than a defence on the part of the general public, who believe Betsy Ross did make it, the writer nevertheless, for the benefit of those

present, will submit extracts from such data as he has had given him, and which he will turn over in full to this Society.

In connection with our flag it might be well to state that at first many flags of different designs were used, some of which were state flags, such as the Pine Tree flag of Maine, others like the snake flags (don't tread on me) and later on, some with the stripes and the snake, and just before the adoption of our "first flag," that known as the "Grand Union" flag with stripes and the English Union in the corner.

This latter flag was probably in use about a year; yet so far, no mention of same has been found in any official records, as the writer has been repeatedly assured. The first mention of any flag seeming to be the resolution of Congress adopting our first flag of stars and stripes, on June 14, 1777, as per photograph of original manuscript, on exhibit with the piece of flooring to-day, and which hereby also becomes the property of our society. As in a year's time no notice was taken officially of the Grand Union flag, and as it no doubt took some time to order material and make same into flags after the design of our United States flag had been definitely decided upon, and as the government was probably not in too great a hurry to pay bills at this time, it seems as though the flag must have been first made previous to June 14, 1777, or some time in 1776, when General Washington may have been in Philadelphia. Besides this—we have the recollections of the family as per affidavits to be presented below, and the likelihood that previous to the Declaration of Independence when the flag was made, in accordance with the following affidavits—great secrecy was a necessity in a matter of this kind, and no official

notice could be taken of the same; then it is likely in the strenuous times that followed, what then seemed more important matters were given attention, rather than the flag, and indeed for many years afterward the matter of the flag-maker was not so much thought of, evidently the great historical importance not being then fully realized.

It is interesting to note, that in both the paintings of the artists, Charles Wilson Peale (captain of a company in the Battle of Trenton) showing General Washington at the Battle of Trenton, and John Trumbull (aide-de-camp to General Washington at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton) both show our flag as adopted by Congress. These men were known for their great accuracy of details and are presumed not to have deliberately erred in this one most important particular.

It may also be of interest to note that probably the first instance of any flag containing stripes being carried by any of our troops, was that of the First Troop of Philadelphia, which acted as an escort to General Washington in June of 1775, and carried a flag with small silver stripes in the corner, which was presented to the troop by its first Captain Abraham Markoe, whose descendants still are living in Philadelphia.

There was no change in the flag until May 1, 1795, when two extra stripes were added for the States of Vermont and Kentucky, which had come into the Union. After this there was no change until 1818, when provision was made for the addition of a star for each State which subsequently should come into the union, and thirteen stripes forever.

It was at the bombardment of Fort M'Henry in 1812 that the "Star Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key, who was an aid-



de-camp to General Smith, who was in charge of the defence of Baltimore.

It is well to note that the old number of the Flag House as previously mentioned was No. 89 (See MacPherson's and White's directories from the first part of 1786 to the time of Betsy's and her husband's removal to Second street near Walnut street in 1791) and it was in No. 89 Arch street (now No. 239) that she lived at the time of making the first flag, as she told her daughters, and as since has come down to her great-great-grandson, Mr. Lloyd Balderston, Jr.

Note: For other places of residence of Betsy Ross see "Claypoole Genealogies."

Elizabeth Claypole, (Betsy Ross), gave up the business of flag making in about 1833 and lived with her son-in-law Edward Satterthwaite, in Abington, Montgomery county, Pa. She returned to Philadelphia however, about 1835, and during the short remainder of her life lived with the family of her daughter, Jane Canby, where she died on January 30th, 1836, at the age of 84 years. She and her husband had joined the Society of Free Quakers shortly after its establishment, and both were buried in the burying ground of that denomination, on South Fifth street below Locust. Their remains in 1857 were transferred to a lot in Mount Moriah Cemetery—and a movement is now on foot to re-inter her remains in a more conspicuous part of the grounds—and erect an imposing mausoleum to her memory. The cost of the same to be born by a number of patriotic societies. See account in Philadelphia Inquirer of December 13th, 1908.

No portrait of Elizabeth Claypole (Betsy Ross) exists in so far as is known. A miniature of one of her daughters, by Rembrandt Peale,

made about 1806, and one of another daughter, believed to be by the same artist, are in existence; but the mother is thought to never have sat for her portrait.

As a young woman from all accounts Betsy Ross was very vivacious and attractive, as well as handy with the needle.

Elizabeth Claypole (Betsy Ross) told the story of having made the first flag on many occasions to her daughters, nieces, grand-daughters and others. The younger women who helped her in making flags naturally heard it most frequently, and these included at different times, many relatives, but it never likely occurred to any of them that there was any particular reason for publishing the story, and as none of them were especially literary, they thought little of the subject, at the time, and no doubt supposed the facts being so clear, would be retold, either from the records of the government or the papers of the distinguished men to whom the facts were so well known. In 1857, when Clarissa Sydney Wilson, the oldest Claypole daughter of Elizabeth Claypole (Betsy Ross) and her successor in business, was retiring from the business and moving from Philadelphia to Fort Madison, Iowa, she gave the subject some thought and requested her nephew, William J. Canby, to transcribe the story at her dictation and as she had often heard her mother tell it, probably even then having in mind, a desire to simply perpetuate the story for its interest to the descendants of the maker of the first of our now glorious flag.

Whatever may have been her purpose in making the request she did have her nephew take down the story from her own lips; but nothing was done to make public the notes; until some years later, when William

J. Canby compiled the same, and at which time the aunt who had requested him to write the story had already died.

The following are affidavits from a daughter, a niece, grand-daughter, grand-nieces, etc. of Betsy Ross and speak for themselves. The reference to "The first American flag, and who made it" refers to the article by Mr. Canby to which affidavits were attached.

**AFFIDAVIT NO. 1 By Sophia B. Hildebrandt.**

I remember to have heard my grandmother, Elizabeth Claypole, frequently narrate the circumstance of her having made the first Star Spangled Banner; that it was a specimen flag made to order of a committee of Congress, acting in conjunction with General Washington, who called upon her personally at her store on Arch street, below Third street, Philadelphia, shortly before the Declaration of Independence that she said that General Washington made a redrawing of the design with his own hands after some suggestions made by her; and that this specimen flag was exhibited in Congress by a committee, with a report, and that the flag and report were approved and adopted by Congress, and she received an unlimited order from the committee to make flags for the government; and to my knowledge she continued to manufacture the government flags for about fifty years, when my mother succeeded her in the business, in which I assisted. I believe the facts stated in the foregoing article entitled "The First American Flag, and Who Made It" are all strictly true.

Witness my hand and seal at Philadelphia, the twenty-seventh day of May A. D. 1870.

S. B. HILDEBRANDT.

Witnesses present, Isaac Oakford, Charles H. Evans.

State of Pennsylvania,  
City of Philadelphia, ss

On the Twenty-Seventh day of May A. D. 1870, Before me Charles H. Evans, a Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, duly commissioned, residing in the said City of Philadelphia personally appeared the within named Sophia B. Hildebrandt, who being duly affirmed did depose and say that the statements within certified to by her are strictly true, according to the best of her knowledge and belief, and that she is the daughter of Clarissa S. Wilson, who was a daughter of Elizabeth Claypole.

Affirmed and subscribed before me, this day and year aforesaid.

Witness my hand and Notorial seal,

S. B. HILDEBRANT.

Charles H. Evans, Notary Public.

Sophia Hildebrandt was the daughter of Clarissa S. Wilson before mentioned, who was a daughter of Elizabeth Claypole (Betsy Ross).

**AFFIDAVIT NO. 2 By Margaret Boggs.**

I, Margaret Boggs, of the City of Philadelphia, widow, do hereby certify that I have heard my aunt, Elizabeth Claypole, say many times that she made the first Star Spangled Banner that ever was made with her own hands; that she made it on an order of General Washington and a committee of the Continental Congress, who together called personally upon her at her house on the north side of Arch street, below Third, Philadelphia, some time previously to the Declaration of Independence. That they brought with them a drawing, roughly made, of the proposed flag; that she said it was wrong, and proposed alterations, which Washington and Committee approved; that one of these alterations was in regard to the number of points to the

star; that she said that it should be five pointed and showed them how to fold a piece of paper in the proper manner, and with one cut of the scissors, to make a five pointed star; that General Washington sat at her table in a back parlor, where they were, and made a drawing of the flag embodying her suggestions, and that she made the flag according to this drawing, and the Committee carried it before Congress by whom it was approved and adopted. That she received orders to make flags for the Government as fast as possible, and from that time forward for upward of fifty years she made all the flags made for the United States in Philadelphia, and largely for the other naval stations. I was for many years a member of her family, and aided her in the business. I believe the facts stated in the foregoing article, entitled "The First American Flag, and Who Made It," which has been read to me, are all strictly true.

Witness my hand at Germantown, in the city of Philadelphia, this third day of June, A. D. 1870.

MARGARET BOGGS.

Witnesses present, Charles B. Engle, Stephen T. Beale.

State of Pennsylvania,  
City of Philadelphia, ss.

On the Third day of June A. D. 1870 before me Charles B. Engle, a Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, duly commissioned, residing in the said city of Philadelphia, personally appeared the within named Margaret Boggs, who being duly affirmed did depose and say that the statements within certified to be hers are all strictly true, according to the best of her knowledge and belief, and that she is a daughter of Sarah Donaldson, who was a sister of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Affirmed and subscribed before me day and year aforesaid.

Witness my hand and Notarial Seal  
M. BOGGS.

Charles B. Engle, Notary Public.

NOTE: It is of importance to call attention to the fact that Margaret Boggs was actually associated in business with Betsy Ross and as a partner of course paid particular attention to the statement of Betsy Ross about making the first United States flag of stars and stripes, which she in turn told to her nieces and nephews direct.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 3 By Rachael Fletcher.

I remember having heard my mother, Elizabeth Claypoole, say frequently that she with her own hands (while she was the widow of John Ross) made the first Star Spangled Banner that ever was made. I remember to have heard her also say that it was made on order of a committee, of whom Col. Ross was one, and that Robert Morris was also one of the committee. That General Washington, acting in conference with the committee called with them at her house. This house was on the north side of Arch street a few doors below Third street, above Bread street, a two story house with an attic and dormer window, now standing, the only one of the row left, the old number being 89; it was formerly occupied by Daniel Niles, a shoemaker. Mother at first lived in the house next, east and when the war came she moved into the house of Daniel Niles. That it was in the month of June, 1776, or shortly before the Declaration of Independence that the committee called on her. That the member of the committee named Ross was an uncle of her deceased husband. That she was previously acquainted with Washington, and that he had often been in her house in friendly visits, as well



as on business. That she had embroidered ruffles for his shirt bosom and cuffs, and that it was partly owing to his friendship for her that she was chosen to make the flag. That when the Committee (with General Washington) came into her store she showed them into her parlor back of the store, and one of them asked her if she could make the flag, and that she replied that she did not know, but she could try. That they then showed her a drawing, roughly executed, of the flag as it was proposed to be made by the committee, and that she saw in it some defects in its proportions and the arrangement and the shape of the stars. That she said it was square and that a flag should be one-third longer than its width, that the stars were scattered promiscuously over the field, and she said that they should be in lines, or in some adopted form, as a circle or a star and that the stars were six pointed in the drawing and she said they should be five pointed that the gentlemen of the committee and General Washington very respectfully considered the suggestions and acted upon them. General Washington seated himself at a table with a pencil and paper, altered the drawing and they made a new one according to the suggestions of my mother. That General Washington seemed to her to be the active one in making the design the others having little or nothing to do with it. That the committee then requested her to call on one of their number, a shipping merchant on the wharf and then adjourned. That she was punctual to her appointment, and then the gentleman drew out of a chest an old ship's color which he loaned her to show her how the sewing was done, and also gave her the drawing finished according to her suggestions. That this drawing was done in water col-

ors by William Barrett, an artist who lived on the north side of Cherry street above Third street, a large three story brick house on the west side of an alley which ran back to the Pennsylvania Academy for Young Ladies, kept by James A. Neal, the best school of the kind in the city at that time. That Barrett only did the painting, and he had nothing to do with the design. He was often employed by mother afterwards, to paint the coats of arms of the United States and of the States on silk flags. That other designs had also been made by the committee and given to other seamstresses to make but that they were not approved. That mother went diligently to work on her flag and soon finished it, and returned it, the first Star Spangled Banner that was ever made, to her employers; that it was run up to the peak of one of the vessels belonging to one of the committee then lying at the wharf, and was received with shouts of applause by the few bystanders who happened to be looking on. That the committee on the same day carried the flag into Congress, sitting in the State House, and made a report presenting the flag and the drawing, and that Congress unanimously approved and accepted the report. That the next day Col. Ross called upon my mother and informed her that her work had been approved, and her flag adopted, and he gave orders for the purchase of all the materials, and the manufacture of as many flags as she could make. And from that time forward for over fifty years she continued to make flags for the United States Government.

I believe the facts stated in the foregoing articles, entitled, "The



First American Flag, and Who Made It," are all strictly true.

RACHAEL FLETCHER.

This affidavit having been signed by Rachael Fletcher with violet ink, the signature has faded, but at this time seventh month 24th, 1908, still plainly legible.

I, Mary Fletcher Wigert, daughter of said Rachael Fletcher, recognize the signature in the rectangular space outlined in black above, as the signature of my mother.

Signed in the presence of Mary W. Miller, Philadelphia, Seventh Mo. 24th, 1908.

Rachael Fletcher,  
Mary Fletcher Wigert

State of New York  
City of New York, ss

On the 31st, day of July A. D. 1871. Before me the subscriber a Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of New York, duly commissioned, residing in the said city of New York, personally appeared the above named Rachael Fletcher. Who being duly affirmed did depose and say that the statements above certified to by her are all strictly true according to the best of her knowledge and belief, and that she is the daughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Affirmed and subscribed before me the day and year aforesaid.

Witness my hand and Notarial seal

TH. J. M'EVILY,

Notary Public,

City and County, New York.  
State of Pennsylvania,  
County of Delaware, ss

Before me, Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace in and for the Borough of Media, County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Rupert Griscom Beale, who being duly sworn according to law doth depose and say; that the attached copies of affidavits of Margaret Boggs, Rachael Fletcher and Sophia B. Hildebrant are true,

accurate, verbatim copies of the original affidavits.

Witness

Signed

Charles A. Schlachter

Rupert Griscom Beale

Harry V. Tomlinson

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 12th day of January A. D. 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER,

Justice of the Peace.

My Commission expires May 6, 1912.

NOTE:—The foregoing affidavits are copies from the original affidavits attached to an article by William J. Canby read before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania March 14th, 1870, and now in the possession of Mr. Lloyd Balderston, West Chester, Pa.

#### AFFIDAVIT NO. 4.

BETSY ROSS, AS I KNEW HER  
AND FROM FAMILY RECORDS.  
MRS. SUSAN M'CORD TURNER'S  
RECOLLECTION OF HER  
GRAND-AUNT, BETSY ROSS.

I am grand-daughter of Captain William Donaldson, a sailor who fought in the Revolutionary War and the grand-daughter of Corporal Mark McCord in Colonel Richard Humpton's Tenth Pennsylvania Regiment, who died in the service, and I am a member of the Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Mark McCord's son, David, married Sarah Donaldson, these were my father and mother.

Sarah Donaldson was the daughter of Captain William Donaldson and Sarah Griscom, his wife.

Sarah Griscom, my grand-mother, was the sister of Elizabeth Griscom, the "Betsy Ross" of history. These two were sisters of Deborah, Susan, Mary, Hannah, George and Rachel Griscom.

I am therefore the grand-niece of Betsy Ross. I have vivid personal

recollections of her as "Aunt Claypoole (then pronounced as Claypole). She was small of stature and was beautiful even in her old age. She died in 1836.

Betsy was married three times. Her first husband was John Ross, the son of an Episcopal clergyman, and a nephew of Colonel Ross of the Flag Committee. Her husband was killed by an explosion of gun powder on the wharf, and Betsy continued the business of upholstery that they together had established in the Arch street store.

It was as the widow Ross that she made the first flag. To her belongs the credit of suggesting the five pointed star. It is literally true that she cut a five pointed star out of paper and showed it to the committee.

She was an excellent needle woman and a fine housekeeper, as were most of the ladies of that time. Being attractive as well as young (in her twenty-fourth year) she was courted and married by Captain Ashburn, a gallant sailor and patriot who together with his brother-in-law, Captain Donaldson, was captured by a British vessel and carried to London.

The two were confined in Mill prison. Other American patriots shared their captivity. Although rebels, they had the sympathy of many London people. One humble admirer and friend was a baker, who furnished bread to the prisoners. Whenever news favorable to the colonies was received, this good man informed the prisoners through scraps of paper concealed in one of their loaves.

The prison officials suspected a leak, but failed to detect the offender until the news of the surrender of Cornwallis reached London. The captive Americans knew of the victory before the news had reached the outskirts of the city. A rigid inves-

tigation resulted in the detection of the friendly baker. He was hanged as a traitor.

Our patriots, overjoyed at the news, gave vent to their feeling in repeated cheers; the jailers thought that their prisoners had gone mad. All participated but Captain Ashburn, who sat quietly in his chair. When addressed, he made no reply. An examination revealed the fact that he was dead. Joy had killed him.

It was a sad party that returned to Philadelphia after the war and a sad duty devolved upon Captain Donaldson, who asked John Claypoole to inform Betsy Ross of her second bereavement.

Mr. Ross left no issue, but Betsy and Captain Ashburn had two children. One died in infancy, the other, Eliza, married Captain Stillman, who left four children, Ashburn, William, Harriet and Amelia. The last named married Mr. Boyd.

Betsy's third husband was John Claypoole. They had four children: Clarissa, who married Mr. Wilson; Rachel, who married Mr. Fletcher; Susanna, who married Mr. Satherwaite, and Jane who married Mr. Canby. Our cousin, George Canby, son of the last named couple, informs me that the family made flags for the government until 1857.

Betsy and her husband joined the "Free Quakers" and their signatures appear on the records of that society. Through the kindness of the custodians of the book of signatures, George Canby was enabled to obtain fac-similes of the signatures of John and Elizabeth. It is an interesting fact that upon the same page appears the signature of Lydia Darragh, the patriotic girl, who notified Washington of the contemplated attack of the British. You are all familiar with the narrative.

To return to Captain Donaldson—

he was a brother of Arthur Donaldson, who built the chevaux-de-frise or chain guard across the Delaware channel and he assisted in its construction.

Aunt Claypoole's second residence was on Front street below Walnut, the grounds running to Dock street. At that time Dock street was a creek that ran up to Fourth street. I recollect the house well. It was quite large with commodious parlors, large dining, butler's room and kitchen, and a bath room, not so common an apartment as now.

At this time, Betsy had retired from active business. She had become blind. The upholstering was carried on in the family; my brother, Charles McCord, establishing a branch in Mobile, which he maintained until his death, subsequent to the Civil War.

During the Revolution, the patriotic women spun their flax and wool and wove the fabrics from which their clothing was made. Betsy's sister (Mrs. Hannah Lovering) cut cloth and discarded clothing into strips and wove them into carpet. This is said to be the first "rag carpet" made in Philadelphia.

Betsy's sister, Sarah Donaldson, my grandmother, was wounded by the fire of a British sentry from the landing place near the foot of Market street. She, her husband and babe, afterwards Mrs. Margaret Boggs and a negro boy were in a yawl and the boat was hailed by a sentry with orders to come to land or she would be fired into. Captain Donaldson was indignant, and defying the sentry dared him to "fire." The sentry did so and my grandmother was shot through the wrist.

Betsy's father was Samuel Griscome, who married Rebecca James. He had a lumber yard bounded by Arch street and Race street and Third and Fourth streets. The stock

was consumed by an incendiary fire that the primitive apparatus of the day could not control. He then located on Front street.

John Ross' father was Reverend Aeneas Ross, of New Castle, Delaware, assistant in Christ Church in the city of Philadelphia and Rector of Old Trinity (Oxford) Church, above Frankford. He officiated at the same time that music was "led" by Demas Worrell the great-great-grandfather of my granddaughter, Edna Randolph Worrell.

Betsy was not only attractive personally, but her soul was adorned with the Christian graces. She was proverbially charitable. Many gifts gladdened the inmates of the old "Bettering House." Mother's sister, "Peggy" Donaldson, Mrs. Edward Boggs, who died in Germantown in 1876, aged one hundred years, five months and some days and others, told of the loaves of bread and parcels of tea that Betsy frequently sent to the above institution. I once when a very little girl went on this errand with my half-sister, Harriet. The inmates were neatly dressed in caps, kerchiefs and mitts, and a stranger could not tell from their appearance whether they were privileged visitors or members of the household. There was also a Quaker almshouse at Walnut street above Third where the carefully tended garden furnished herbs used in that day and many a cold was cured by the medicated candy made by these old ladies.

I have necessarily brought the family history into this narrative, but will close by explaining how Betsy became a business woman.

The business was established by a Mr. Webster, who employed John Ross. John Ross learned the trade and married Betsy so they naturally succeeded Mr. Webster. Betsy's skill and taste were important factors in the success of their enterprise and

they moved from the first business place on Chestnut street to more eligible quarters on Arch street, now called the "Flag House."

Betsy's work on the first flag greatly pleased the Committee composed of General Washington, Colonel Ross and Robert Morris and she was directed to purchase all the bunting available in the town. She accepted the contract and for many years our kinswoman was enabled to furnish flags to the government.

Betsy worshipped in Christ Church. Her pew is marked. The remains of her first husband lie in the church yard.

Susan McCord Turner

Witness at signing

Annie E. Gormley

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

City and County of Philadelphia: ss.

Before me the subscriber a Notary Public for the Commonwealth aforesaid residing in the said City personally appeared Susan McCord Turner who being duly sworn according to law did depose and say that the facts and statements set forth in the above or foregoing pages are true to the best of her knowledge and belief.

Susan M. Turner

Sworn and subscribed to before me this Seventh day of January A. D. 1909.

EDWIN STEARNE,

Notary Public.

Commission expires January 13, 1909.

NOTE: The writer would like to state that he within a year, personally had a long and interesting talk with the above grandniece of Betsy Ross and found Mrs. Turner's mind clear and full of most interesting anecdotes relating to this and other historical subjects. She is most wonderfully preserved and an interesting woman and ninety-one years of age, and is I believe present here to-day.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 5 Mrs. Margaret McCord Smith.

I am the youngest daughter of David and Sarah McCord. David McCord was the son of Corporal Mark McCord who served during the Revolutionary War in Colonel Richard Humpton's 10th Penna., Regiment. He was wounded and died three weeks afterwards, from the effects of his wounds. (He received honorable mention at the time he obtained a furlough after being wounded.)

My mother, Sarah Donaldson McCord, was the daughter of Captain William Donaldson, and his wife Sarah Griscom Donaldson. Sarah Griscom Donaldson was the daughter of Andrew and Sarah Griscom, and a sister of Betsy Ross. After the death of my grandmother, my mother (then a child) went to live with her aunt, Deborah Bolton. After Deborah Bolton died in 1793, of the fever, my mother made her home with her aunt Betsy Claypoole, and stayed there until her marriage. I recollect my great-aunt Betsy Claypoole very distinctly. She was a beautiful little old lady with very blue eyes. When I was about ten years of age she was then living with her daughter, Mrs. Jane Canby, wife of Caleb Canby, on Cherry street a few doors above Fifth, at the corner of Cresson's Alley, in a large double three story brick house. I frequently went there, because my aunt Mrs. Margaret Donaldson Boggs boarded there with her aunt (Mrs. Claypoole) and was associated with her in the upholstery business. I recollect having heard mother say many times, that her aunt, Betsy Ross, made the first American flag, in the house on Arch street, below Third, present number 239. After Betsy Ross made the first flag, she had orders from Colonel Ross to buy up all available bunting and



make flags. After the death of Mr. John Ross, his widow was married to Captain Joseph Ashburn. After the death of Captain Joseph Ashburn she was married to Mr. John Claypoole, a Custom House official. She still carried on the upholstery business and made flags for the government and mattresses for the ships on the Delaware river.

Signed:

MARGARET M'CORD SMITH.

Witness:

Coralie Rubens Freeman,

Carrie E. Lake.

State of Pennsylvania,

County of Delaware, ss.

Before me, Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace, in and for the Borough of Media, County and State aforesaid, personally appeared the above named Margaret McCord Smith, who being duly sworn according to law, doth depose and say that the above is true and accurate statement of facts.

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 12th day of January A. D. 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER,

Justice of the Peace.

My commission expires May 6, 1912.

The first death recorded by yellow fever in this country was that of the above Deborah Bolton in 1793.

Margaret McCord Smith is in her 87th year at the time of signing the above paper and I believe is with us to-day at this meeting.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 6, of Susan Satterthwaite Newport, and additionally, Mary Satterthwaite.

I, Susan Satterthwaite Newport, of Abington township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, wife of David Newport of the same place, hereby certify that I have heard my mother, Susanna Satterthwaite, daughter of Betsy Ross, say many, many times that she (Betsy Ross) made the first United States flag with the stars and

stripes, after a design submitted to her by General George Wahington, Colonel George Ross, and some other gentleman whose name I do not recall, and that my mother repeated this as having been told to her by her mother Betsy (Ross) Claypoole. That Betsy Ross suggested some changes be made in the design of the flag; one being the changing of the stars from a six-pointed to a five-pointed star as being more symmetrical.

These gentlemen went to see Betsy Ross at her home which was on the north side of Arch street, below Third street, the number was then 89, but now changed to 239, in this house she continued in the flag business, and later was assisted by her niece Margaret Donaldson Boggs, the business of flag making and upholstery increased to such proportions that she employed a large force of girls. She subsequently retired from the business and was succeeded in the work by her daughter, Clarissa Claypoole Wilson who continued it for years, the exact date of which I do not remember. Subsequently she too retired from the business on account of conscientious scruples.

My grandmother was so outspoken that when the British officers were in Philadelphia and quartered at her home they called her the "Little Rebel" by which name she became well known. Her intelligence and intellect characterized her as far above the average woman of the day. Her knowledge of the science of medicine was remarkable. She was an anti-Rushite and antagonistic to the use of calomel as a drug and the practice of bleeding, so prevalent in the early days of medicine. She investigated the curative powers of drugs, made many formulas and compounds which were eagerly sought by her friends and neighbors, who had confidence in her skill. One of her valuable formulas

was for an excellent eye wash. Betsy Ross never went back to Friends' Meeting after having been "read out" for marrying John Ross who was not a Friend but she subsequently joined the Free Quakers sometime after her marriage to John Claypoole.

Signed:

SUSAN S. NEWPORT,  
MARY SATTERTHWAITE.

Witness:

Clifton Cabell,  
David Newport,  
Chas. S. Kinsey,  
State of Pennsylvania,  
County of Delaware, ss.

Before me Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace in and for the Borough of Media and State aforesaid, personally appeared Susan S. Newport and additionally Mary Satterthwaite her sister, who being affirmed according to law, they each and jointly do depose and say that the statements subscribed to by them are true and accurate and so they do affirm.

Affirmed and subscribed to before me this 12th day of January A. D. 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER,  
Justice of the Peace.

My commission expires May 6, 1912.

NOTE: Mrs. Susan Satterthwaite Newport is in her 82d year, Miss Mary Satterthwaite in her 84th year at the signing of the above paper and in excellent mental and bodily health. They told the writer in addition, much that would be interesting anent this subject, but being extremely conscientious seemed desirous to have recorded only that appearing above and which was sent the writer.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 7. of seven great-grand-nephews and nieces of Betsy Ross.

We, the undersigned, sons and daughters of the late Stephen Thomas Beale, M. D., D. D. S., and his wife Louise Boggs Beale, of Philadelphia,

Pa., hereby certify that we have often heard our great-aunt Margaret Donaldson Boggs (who resided with our parents for a period of over thirty years) relate the history of the making of the first U. S. flag, by Betsy Ross.

Mrs. Margaret Donaldson Boggs was for many years associated in the upholstery business with her aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Griscome Claypoole, the Betsy Ross of history. Mrs. Boggs received from Mrs. Claypoole the following facts: That Mrs. Claypoole at that time Betsy Ross, widow of John Ross, upholsterer, received in person, at her home on Arch street (north side) below Third street, General Washington, Colonel Ross and Robert Morris, who submitted to her a design for a National flag. This design was changed in some particulars, and the work of making the flag was given to Mrs. Ross.

Signed:

JOSEPH BOGGS BEALE,  
ALBERT B. BEALE,  
HENRY B. BEALE,  
DANIEL S. BEALE,  
LOUISE BOGGS CULVER,  
CLARA S. BEALE BROOM,  
EMILY J. BEALE.

Witnesses:

Emily Isola Beale Cooper,  
Henry Moore,  
Helen J. Swanson,  
Richard Sloan,  
George L. Bockius,  
Helen J. Swanson.  
State of Pennsylvania,  
County of Delaware, ss.

Before me Percival V. Cooper, a duly commissioned Justice of the Peace, in and for the Borough of Media, County and State aforesaid, personally appeared Joseph Boggs Beale, Albert B. Beale, Henry B. Beale, Daniel S. Beale, Louise Boggs Culver, Clara S. Beale Broom, and Emily J. Beale who being duly sworn according to law, they each and jointly

do depose and say that the facts herewith subscribed to are true and accurate statements of fact.

JOSEPH B. BEALE,

Signed:

ALBERT B. BEALE,

HENRY B. BEALE,

DANIEL S. BEALE,

LOUISE BOGGS CULVER,

CLARA S. BEALE BROOM,

EMILY J. BEALE.

Witnesses:

Chas. E. McClellan,

Andrew F. Hammond,

John Kerr,

William R. McNeill,

Chas. E. McClellan.

Chas. E. McClellan.

Sworn and subscribed to before me this 12th day of January A. D., 1909.

PERCIVAL V. COOPER,

Justice of the Peace.

My commission expires May 6, 1912.

AFFIDAVIT NO. 8. Sarah M. Wilson's Statement:

The first American flag was made by my great grandmother Betsy Ross at 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, Pa., Copy made by me. I presented to Charles Wm. Smith of the Sons of the Revolution and Pioneer in saving the home.

SARAH M. WILSON.

Assistant Superintendent of Independence Hall.

6-14-96.

Note: Miss Wilson is a direct descendant of the maker of the flag and the writer regrets he was unfortunate in not being able personally to interview her before delivering this address. No. 9. Letters from Mary S. Garrett, a descendant of Betsy Ross.

"Phila. August 3, 1892.

"C. W. Smith, Esq., Philadelphia.

"Dear Sir: I thank you for inquiry and fully appreciate your endeavor to restore and preserve the old homestead of my maternal ancestor, Mrs. John Ross, No. 239 Arch street, the de-

signer and maker of the first American flag, combining thirteen stars and thirteen stripes. I cannot conceive any act more patriotic and which should receive the hearty support of the people of this country. Even in this historic old city, the old time landmarks are making way to the march of business. I believe this is the only house now standing of Colonial times having a National record not owned by the city municipality, and I think it is next in importance and fully as dear to the hearts of the people as Independence Hall, itself, cementing the acts therein framed, and symbolizing a Nation of free people.

What an electric thrill passes through the people of this Nation when this good old flag suffers insult, how many have sacrificed their lives for it; what is there dearer to the hearts of the people. It has been the theme of statesmen and forts the world over.

"Would it not be a blot on the escutcheon of this country, that this hallowed pile of bricks (every one should be worth its weight in gold), should be crumbled to dust, and its patriotic memories destroyed forever; I cannot find words to express my feelings at the very thought of this grand old building being destroyed for simply money gain. When there are so many wealthy patriotic people all over this country, men and women, many of whom would pay the price you mention out of their own pockets and not even feel it, as their names would be handed down to posterity, as having preserved this monument of the birth of the Nation?

"Sincerely yours,

"MARY S. GARRETT."

In view of the present attempt of iconoclasts to discredit history bearing upon Betsy Ross and the first flag, the following certificate, signed and delivered in 1892 by three grandchil-

dren of the first flag maker, this is interesting:

Betsy Ross House, Birthplace of the United States Flag, 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, Penna., U. S. A.

"We certify, this picture published by C. W. Smith, of Philadelphia correctly represents the house, No. 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, as it now appears, in which the first United States flag of thirteen stars and thirteen stripes was made by our grandmother, Mrs. John Ross, under the direction of the committee of the Continental Congress, of which her husband's uncle, Colonel George Ross, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was chairman. It was made from a design furnished by General George Washington, which she modified by changing the form and arrangement of the stars and the given proportion of the flag.

"GEORGE CANBY,

"MARY CANBY GULIN,

"MARY SIDNEY GARRETT.

(Signed)

"Copyright C. W. Smith, 1892."

Note: The picture referred to above is the well known cut of the flag house.

The statements in the above affidavits seem to show that Betsy Ross told various separate and distinct people, while the subject was still fresh in her mind, that she made a flag on or about June 1, 1776 to the order of General Washington, Robert Morris, and her husband's uncle Col. George Ross. Also that it was at her suggestion the stars were made five pointed and that the flag she then made, became the national standard of our country.

In no respect, in so far as any recorded facts are concerned do they conflict, and it would therefore indicate that General Washington designed the flag of stars and stripes, and that Betsy Ross made the first flag from this design about a month be-

fore the Declaration of Independence.

It might also be born in mind that the three gentlemen might have been acting in accordance with the understanding with the "secret committee" of which Robert Morris was chairman, and which would account for Betsy's reference to the committee in her conversation with all the above people. The relationship between Col. Ross one of the members of the committee and signer of the Declaration of Independence, etc., with the flag maker must also be well considered. And in this connection it may be interesting to quote from an article by the Honorable Hampton L. Carson entitled "Pennsylvania Defiance of the United States" in the November 1908 issue of Harper's Monthly Magazine, that "Judge George Ross, signer of the Declaration of Independence and a cousin of Betsy Ross who made the first American Flag" tried the celebrated case of State, against the United States Jurisdiction, growing out of the capture of the British cutter "Active" on the high seas in October 1778, and which threatened bloodshed and possibly more dire results.

Regarding the number of changes in the design of the first flag and whether General Washington had in mind his coat of arms when the sketch was made, does not seem important to the writer as he believes no claim has ever been made that Betsy Ross designed the flag, only that she made the first flag and therefore any number of changes, in the design which she may have made from one to many, as testified in above affidavits is not essential to the main issue.

In order to satisfy his own mind regarding the truth of the flag's maker, etc., Mr. C. W. Smith sent the following letter to various historical societies throughout the country as well as personally investigated all available sources of local information and from



the answers received was perfectly satisfied of Betsy Ross being the maker, the time 1776, and the place 239 Arch street or what we now know as the flag house.

May 12, 1892.

"Sec'y, Respected Sir:

From the information you have, be good enough to answer the following:

1st. Where was the first battle of the Revolution fought, and authentic authority for same?

2d. Where was the first flag of the United States made?

3d. By whom was it made?

4th. Location of the house?

5th. In which building in Philadelphia was the Declaration of Independence signed?

Yours truly,

C. W. SMITH."

May 18, 1892.

Two of the various answers from Historical Societies (one of which is generally conceded to be quite the best equipped and most accurate in the United States) were as follows:

"Dear Sir:

Your letter of this date to hand. I make the following replies to your inquiries:

1st. Lexington, Massachusetts, April 19th, 1775.

2d., 3d., 4th. June 1776; Penna.; Phila.; Mrs. Ross who lived on Arch street below Third, house still standing. Refer to Admiral Prebles' History of the American Flag.

5th. Independence Hall.

Yours, truly, etc."

May 20, 1892.

"Mr. C. W. Smith, Phila.

Dear Sir:

Your favor of the 16th inst. is received and in reply would say that according to our best knowledge and belief the first battle of the Revolution was the skirmish at Lexington, Mass., 19 April, 1775.

The first flag of the United States

was made at Philadelphia by Mrs. John Ross, at 239 Arch street, 1776.

The Declaration of Independence was signed by the majority in Independence Hall, Phila., in July and August, 1776.

Yours truly, etc."

Perhaps the following which connects our late martyred president, William McKinley, with the flag will be of more than passing interest.

Phila. January 16, 1909.

Mr. Oliver Randolph Parry,

My Dear Sir:

It may be of further interest to you to know that the silk flag used at the obsequies of our late President McKinley was made by Mr. Harry R. Turner, great-great-grand-nephew of Betsy Ross. Mr. Turner had the pleasure of meeting Mr. McKinley, and at that time asked him if he would like to have a flag made by a great-great-grand-nephew of Betsy Ross. Mr. McKinley replied that he would be most happy to have such a flag. Mr. Turner then began the work of making a flag, but before its completion, the President died. After the completion of the flag Mr. Turner communicated the wishes of Mr. McKinley to the authorities at Washington, and offered the flag to be used at the funeral of the President. Hon. John Hay, Secretary of State, accepted the flag and requested that it be sent to him, as is shown by the following letter of the late Hon. John Hay.

September, 16, 1901.

Department of State,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I have received by express the flag which you were so good as to send, with request that it be placed upon the coffin of the President.

I have sent the flag, together with your letter to the Executive Mansion,

in accordance with your wishes.

Very truly yours,  
JOHN HAY.

Harry Turner,

207 South 45th street, Phila., Pa.

This flag draped the casket of the President from the time it left Washington until it reached Canton, Ohio, and Mr. Turner was subsequently honored by its return to him.

RUPERT GRISCOM BEALE.

1116 Girard street, Phila., Pa.

As Mr. Harry R. Turner is present, I would like to offer the suggestion to the society that it might be interesting to have Mr. Turner and Mr. Rupert Beale exhibit the flag and the original letters in connection therewith before the close of this meeting. This courtesy the writer believes would be appreciated as the data I understand is now about to be incorporated in a publication upon this subject.

That much interest in the past has been taken in Betsy Ross and the first flag will be further shown by the following copies of speeches and by the presentations of the subject in various tableaux, etc., and during Founder's Week parade the representation of Betsy Ross making the flag personated by Miss A. H. Turner a great-great-grandniece of Betsy Ross.

In one of these events a Bucks county resident Mrs. Charles Scott (nee Miss Gertrude Wilson) of Churchville, wife of Mr. Charles Scott, the artist, and a great granddaughter of Mrs. Clarissa Wilson, who was a daughter of Betsy Ross by her third husband, John Claypoole, figured.

This was in the tableau of the making of the flags given in the Academy of Music in 1895 and she was chosen as a great-great-granddaughter of Betsy Ross and descendant of the above Mrs. Clarissa Wilson (who was associated with Betsy in the flag making business and con-

tinued the same after her mother's withdrawal until about 1857) to represent Betsy Ross in that scene, and which also by the way had the three characters of General Washington, Robert Morris and Colonel Ross.

She was the daughter of Mr. C. Wilson who was a son of Jacob Wilson, who in turn was a son of Clarissa Sidney Wilson above referred to.

As bearing more fully on the genealogy of Betsy Ross' family I would call your attention to the three photographs of the old Bible with the original entries therein and which become the property of our Society. I will also read a newspaper notice as follows:—

Copied from Philadelphia Ledger,  
March, 1870.

When and Where the First American Flag Was Made.—An Interesting Story.—Last Evening, an interesting meeting of the Pennsylvania Historical Society was held.

Colonel J. Ross Snowden occupied the chair, and Mr. Shrigley, the affable librarian, reported, that since the last stated meeting the Society had received 117 books, 658 pamphlets, six works of art and a relic, the latter being the old fashioned brass knocker taken from the door of Stephen Girard's house, No. 21 or 23, Water street.

William J. Canby, Esq., contributed an interesting and valuable addition to our local as well as national history, by reading an essay upon "The American Flag." He discovered, in tracing the history of this national emblem, that the first instance when the stars and stripes were unfurled, was at the siege of Fort Schuyler, August 17, 1777, and upon an occasion just about one year prior to that time, the brig Nancy was chartered by the Continental Congress to procure military stores in the West Indies, during the latter

part of 1775 While at Porto Rico, in July of the ensuing year, the information came that the Colonists had declared their independence, and with this information came the description of the flag that had been accepted as the national banner.

A young man, Captain Thomas Mandenville, set to work to make one, and successfully accomplished it. The flag was unfurled and saluted with thirteen guns. When the brig Nancy was upon her return voyage, she was hemmed in by British vessels off Cape May. Her officers succeeded in removing all the munitions to the shore, and when the last boat put off a young man in it, John Hancock, jumped into the sea, swam to the vessel ran up the shrouds of the mast, and securing the flag, brought it triumphantly to shore, through a hot fire from the British men-of-war.

The first American flag, however, according to the design and approval of Congress, was made by Mrs. Elizabeth Ross. Three of her daughters still live in our vicinity to confirm this fact—founding their belief, not upon what they saw, for it was made many years before they were born, but upon what their mother had often told them. A niece of this lady, Mrs. Margaret Boggs, aged ninety-five years, now lives in Germantown, and is conversant with the fact. The fact is not generally known that to Philadelphia not only belongs the honor of flinging the first star spangled banner to the breeze, but to a Philadelphia lady belongs the honor of having made it.

The house in which it was made still stands, No. 239 Arch street (old number being 89) the last of an old row. It is related that when Congress had decided upon the design, Colonel George Ross and General Washington visited Mrs. Ross and asked her to make it. She said "I

don't know whether I can, but I'll try" and directly suggested to the gentlemen that the design was wrong, in that the stars were six-pointed and not five-cornered as they should be. This was corrected, she made the flag. Congress accepted it, and for a half dozen years this lady furnished the government with all its national flags, having, of course, a large assistance. This lady was also the wife of Claypoole one of the lineal descendants of Oliver Cromwell.

The address was very elaborate, and very interesting, and at its conclusion the gentleman was officially thanked.

Copied by C. S. Broom.

P. S. No 1. (Mr. George Canby said, "The statement was not correct about Mr. Claypoole being a lineal descendant of Oliver Cromwell.")

P. S. No. 2. In a clipping from the Press 3.19.92, I notice in "May, 1777, Congress made an order on the Treasury to pay Betsy Ross 14s. 12s. 2d. for flags for the fleet in the Delaware River."

C. S. Broom.

The original copy is in the possession of Nina W. Worrell, Regent of the Flag House Chapter, N. S. D. A. R.

## BETSY ROSS

By

Her Grandson, George Canby  
Betsy Ross was the daughter of Samuel and Rebecca (James) Griscom, members of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, so called. Samuel Griscom was a noted builder, and had assisted in the erection of the State House, now Independence Hall, and other important buildings. He lived, owning his dwelling, his shop and a very large garden lot on the north side of Arch street between 3d and 4th. In the large family of daughters Elizabeth—"Betsy" as she was fondly called—was the sixth. She was born Janu-



ary 1st, 1752, which happened on Sunday, and which was also the First day under the new Gregorian calendar. The legend was frequently, playfully repeated in her family that "She was born the first day of the week, the first day of the month, the first day of the year, and the first day of the new style."

In your study of chronology and astronomical time you will understand how every four years we have leap year and give to February 29 days; and how it was on the advent of 1752 eleven days were dropped, so that now we are celebrating Washington's birthday on the 22d of February, when in fact he was born February 11, 1732. She is represented to have always been a bright and winning child and was well trained by her mother and grew up quite beautiful as a young woman; and was amiable and obliging in all her intercourse with others. She was also known to be very expert with the needle and was fond of embroidery and other delicate work. Of course she had many admirers. Among others, was John Ross, a son of Rev. Aeneas Ross, from New-castle, Delaware, who was rector at the old Trinity Church, Oxford, not far from Frankford, and also assistant rector of Christ Church. His brother was the Hon. George Ross, of whom I have already spoken, member of the Pennsylvania Assembly three times delegate to Congress, and afterwards signer of the Declaration of Independence. This young man, John Ross, was serving as an upholsterer with Mr. Webster, who was conducting the leading business at that time in the city.

It happened that one day John saw that the young women in Mr. Webster's establishment were puzzled with some particular work, the draping of some curtains or something of the sort, and he told them

that he knew of a young woman who could arrange it for them, and succeed in inducing Betsy Griscom, with the consent of her mother, to come to their assistance; when Mr. Webster, noticing her superior skill, persuaded her mother to allow her to come and learn the business. It was thus that Betsy became an upholsterer. She never was in the millinery or mantua-making business, as has been sometimes stated. John and Betsy completed their engagement and were married in November, 1773, for which the Friends disowned her from their society. (See Minutes of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of the Northern District 1st Month to 7th Month 1774.) John was an Episcopalian and she attended Christ Church with him. They started business for themselves first on Chestnut street not far from Mr. Webster's and afterward removed to their little house still standing, No. 239 Arch street. Here John Ross died from the effect of an injury received while guarding military stores on the wharf, and was buried in Christ Church burying ground, 5th & Arch streets, on January 20, 1776.

Thus left alone this young widow in whom we are now particularly interested, her father and mother wished her to return to her home, but she heroically determined to continue in business of her own account. She had already attracted the attention of Hon. George Ross, her late husband's uncle, with whom she had become quite a favorite, so that when Washington suggested that a sample flag should be made, Mr. Ross was at no loss as to whom they should get to do the work. It is thus that we can imagine him calling with Robert Morris at the Hancock mansion, before alluded to, at 4th & Arch streets, and with their distinguished companion plodding their way to the little upholstery shop and dwelling on Arch street just below



Third street. She was then asked if she could make the flag, for she had never yet made one. She replied with her sweet diffidence, she did not know, but she would try, and thereupon Washington produced a small paper with a hurried pencil sketch thereon from his pocket with the outline of a flag of thirteen stripes and with a field dotted with thirteen stars.

Betsy had taken some lessons in her trade which well remembered, she ventured an objection that the stars as drawn with six points should have only five. Washington's reply was (and here we see again he was loath to make an exact copy from his coat of arms) that he knew that, but that he considered a star with six points could be more readily made than one with five points. Betsy immediately responded that nothing was easier if one only knew how, and quickly folded a piece of paper in a way she had learned as one of the little arts of her trade, and with one clip of her ready scissors displayed to the astonished eyes of the august committee a true symmetrical five pointed star. This point was then yielded in her favor, and the design was redrawn at her suggestion at a convenient table in the room and she was left to make her sample flag according to her own ideas of proportion and the arrangement of the stars. In a remarkably short time she had completed it, and it was accepted by the committee. She was soon authorized to procure all the bunting she could obtain in Philadelphia for flags for the use of Congress, her uncle (coming back after parting with the committee and laying down a note of large denomination) for the purpose. Thus started the flag making business which was continued by her eldest Claypoole daughter, Mrs. C. S. Wilson, until the year 1857, so that it was quite

easy to trace the history of the flag back to its legitimate birth. All we know by government records in regard to flags, showing how very unsatisfactory is the information obtained therefrom, is one entry of a draft on the Treasury in May, 1777, "To pay Betsy Ross 14 $\frac{1}{2}$  12s 2d. for flags for the fleet in the Delaware River," and one resolution recorded June 14, 1777, in the rough journal of Congress immediately preceding the giving of the command of the Ranger to John Paul Jones, "that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes alternately red and white, that the union be thirteen stars white on a blue field, representing a new constellation." Thus without a word of information of any previous action of any committee who may have reported the resolution or of whose work it was, thus if from this source alone we would be left entirely in the dark as to the true origin of the flag.

You will notice that Betsy Ross received money in May for flags which shows that she must have made them a long time before the record of the resolution establishing the flag; but as it is the official date it is perfectly proper to accept the 14th of June as Flag Day, and as such let it be celebrated.

I have already wearied you quite too long. Much could be said of my grandmother's long and varied life of usefulness and benevolence; her experiences through the Revolutionary War; her continued pleasant acquaintance with Gen. Washington, she occupying a small pew in Christ Church adjoining his; of her second marriage with Captain Ashburn, and his capture on the sea and his death in Mill Hill Prison in Plymouth, England; and of how John Claypoole also a prisoner of war, brought tidings of his death to the stricken one, now twice a widow, and then her marriage with John Claypoole.

my grandfather, and how after his death she lived in usefulness to a good old age, and of my remembrance of her small, delicate and fragile form and the sweet grace of her gentle disposition for some little time before her death, which occurred when I was a little boy of six years old at my father's house, January 30, 1836.

The foregoing is a copy of a portion of a lengthy address, made by George Canby, at the Bridesburg School, T. Worcester Worrell, principal; on February 22d, 1896, on the occasion of the presentation of a picture of Betsy Ross. The full address and account of proceedings were published in the "Frankford Herald" February 26th, from which this extract was taken. The Hon. Thomas V. Cooper also made a speech and the following telegram was received from the late President Cleveland.

"I sincerely trust, that the occasion may arouse a more ardent patriotism with increased love and respect for our country's flag."

The above statements are vouched for by the undersigned, who attended the presentation.

NINA ACADIA WORRELL.

October 15, 1908.

This address was delivered before the school children at Frankford, in 1896. Several points in it George Canby afterward found to be incorrect.

LLOYD BALDERSTON, JR.

12-19-1908.

BETSY ROSS.

An aged man who gives her full credit for the flag.

To the Editor of The Public Ledger:

I desire to call attention to Harper's Magazine of date July, 1873. It contains an article of 11 pages entitled "National Standards and Emblems." It is illustrated in a costly and elaborate manner, and concludes with four pages on the subject of

the American Stars and Stripes and the making of the first flag. This was thirty-five years ago and narrates the call of Washington upon Betsy Ross with the design for the flag, and how, upon examination, she modestly suggested the five pointed star as being more symmetrical. And in this article is an illustration of the "seamstress" as she is called by some, handing Washington the five pointed star.

In the family history of this event it narrates that after securing the order for the work she sat up all night to finish the flag. Now mark the account of the five pointed star, and call upon any of the four granddaughters, all more than 80 years of age, and they will show you how to make the star with one clip of the scissors. The silver hook with her initials engraved upon it is in the possession of the family, also a pair of scissors that may have been the identical pair with which she cut the star during the interview with the august committee.

When I was a boy, some 35 years ago, my mother and grandmother carried their scissors tied by a ribbon to a silver hook fastened to the waist.

My wife is a granddaughter of "Betsy Ross" and she and an elder sister living nearby well remember their patriotic grandmother.

She lived some years at the residence of her son-in-law in Abington township, going later to Philadelphia, where she died in 1836 at the home of another son-in-law Caleb Canby.

It will be asked why the making of the first flag was not mentioned at an earlier date. I reply that the parties were members of a peaceful society, who loved quiet and despised notoriety, and the making of flags was something not talked about. And had it not been for the wonderful curiosity of her grandson, Will-

iam J. Canby, the episode might never have reached publication. We were intimate friends; he was first cousin of my wife's. What William J. Canby said, was to me and all who knew him, absolute truth.

DAVID NEWPORT.

Willow Grove, July 9, 1908.

### THE BETSY ROSS HOUSE.

Editor of The Record:

Answering a question in your paper, permit me to say: The first American flag adopted by Congress June 14, 1777, was made by Betsy Ross at No. 239 Arch street, Philadelphia, from a drawing furnished by General Washington in person, who was one of a committee appointed by Congress to commission her to make Government flags which business was carried on by the family for over 60 years. The small two-story and attic brick house was saved from destruction in the year 1892 by Charles William Smith, a coal merchant of Philadelphia, of the Sons of the Revolution, Historical and Union League Societies.

The home was to be demolished for a factory site in two weeks, by making a better offer and taking option changed the order of things. Years afterward, on lines laid down by Mr. Smith, 1,040,270 Americans paid for it by their small equal subscriptions, clear, December 14, 1905.

The birthplace of the United States flag has been tendered to the City of Philadelphia by the American Flag House and Betsy Ross Memorial Society, whose efforts in its behalf cannot be too highly praised.

WILLIAM HAY.

Philadelphia, May 9.

A letter showing the feeling and reverence for the flag and its maker as given us in the history that has come down to us through the descendants of Betsy Ross and members of the Griscom family, is shown below:

West Philadelphia, Pa.

To Mrs. T. Worcester Worrell,  
Regent Flag House Chapter, D. A. R.

My dear Mrs. Worrell,

I did not reply to your letter sooner because I wished to answer your question about the Betsy Ross article and my sister, Miss Harvey, was out of town, and only returned a day or two ago. I did not see her until last evening. She cannot tell the exact date of the article to which I referred in my former letter, but it was in the spring, (probably April) of 1893. It appeared in the Times; also another in The Record. Miss Harvey was doing considerable writing for both papers about that time.

As everything relating to Betsy Ross will interest you, I will tell you the following, which my sister told me. In 1890 Miss Harvey attended a Woman's Suffrage Congress held in Washington, D. C. At that meeting Miss Phoebe Consius came out on the platform holding a little pamphlet in her hand and said during her address, "Do you know that the first American flag was made by a woman? It was made by Betsy Ross, of Philadelphia." Then she read the pamphlet upon the subject, written by a gentleman in Harrisburg. This, of course, attracted my sister, as she was deeply interested in the history of the early settlement of Pennsylvania.

Shortly after this Miss Harvey went to California and while in San Francisco met Mrs. N. S. Hubbard who was head of the D. A. R. there and who organized Sequoia Chapter. Mr. Hubbard (or Colonel I think) was one of the founders of the National Society D. A. R. (and all the other societies, S. R., D. A. R., D. R. and C. A. R. had their inspiration from this parent organization) so it was natural that his wife should be among the honored by the "daughters." Mrs. Hubbard invited my sister to become a "daughter" so im-



mediately upon her return east in February, 1893, she began to hunt up the necessary data.

Now in the spring of 1893 an event of importance of the Patriotic Societies in California was about to take place in San Francisco. This was the planting of a tree in Golden Gate Park, and about its roots, earth from historical locations in the east. Miss Harvey visited all the most important historical places in Philadelphia and vicinity: Betsy Ross' house; Independence Hall; Christ Church; St. Peter's; Carpenter's Hall, etc., etc., and secured a quart can of earth from each. These she carefully labeled, and with a short description and history shipped to Mrs. Hubbard. And the precious earth dug with reverent hands from our most sacred shrines, was filled in about the roots of that young sapling at the "Golden Gate" a loving link between the East and the West.

It was at this time that Miss Harvey wrote her first article upon Betsy Ross. She visited Mrs. Mund in the "Flag House" and learned all she could from her. Also went to Mt. Moriah Cemetery and sketched Betsy's grave (which then was covered with grass and weeds. Later a flag pole was placed there.)

After a little article appeared, she sent it to California (with the earth she had collected.) It was printed in the San Francisco papers, and copied extensively on the coast, so you see, short as the article was it was a means of sowing seed which bore fruit later. I thought this would interest you.

I enclose a booklet—a copy of the report of work done by the Merion Chapter, D. A. R. which I prepared and read at the Pennsylvania State Conference, held at Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, December 5 and 6, 1906. On page seven you will read the following:

In May 1896, Merion Chapter held  
+ 1898.

several Betsy Ross Sewing Circles, at which were made two "Flags of 1777" copied from the flag made by Betsy Ross, with thirteen stars arranged in a circle. In the first flag the twelve charter members sewed the stripes. The first star was cut by Mrs. Paxon, the Chapter's "Real Daughter." The other twelve stars were cut and sewed in place by the twelve charter members. In the second flag the twelve charter members sewed the stripes, and Mrs. Paxon cut the first star. The other twelve stars were added by the Chapter's new members. The second flag named "Ann King" in memory of another flag maker, who lived at the same time as Betsy Ross.

(In minutes of the Supreme Executive Council, reference is made to Elizabeth Ross and Ann King—Colonial Records 1777; also see Vol I Penns. Archives—2d series.)

On page 9 of the booklet you will see "On October 19th, 1896 there took place in San Francisco, California, an event which was of interest to every patriotic citizen of the United States, and in particular to every resident of the thirteen original States. It was the planting of the thirteen trees in Golden Gate Park, to represent the thirteen original States. Each State sent a tree from some Revolutionary spot, with historic earth to be placed about its roots. The idea originated with Mrs. Gertrude Harvey Hughes, of Merion Chapter. Merion Chapter, in co-operation with Sequoia Chapter, worked to interest other Chapters and bring the matter to a successful conclusion. The trees were planted in the form of a semi circle, with Pennsylvania's tree to represent the keystone. This was a cedar from Valley Forge battle ground, sent by Mrs. Anna M. Holstein, of the Valley Forge Centennial and Memorial Association. The French Government sent some earth from Lafayette's tomb, to be placed at



the roots of Pennsylvania's tree. This was deposited by a French Counsel residing in San Francisco. Delaware County Chapter D. A. R. sent earth from the spot in Chester where William Penn first trod on Pennsylvania's soil."

Other States sent trees as follows:

New Hampshire—A sugar maple from the homestead of General Stark.

Massachusetts—An elm from Concord.

Rhode Island—A birch from the birth place of General Nathaniel Greene.

Connecticut—A young oak, from an acorn of the Charter Oak.

New Jersey—A linden from Washington's headquarters, at Somerville.

Delaware—A red maple from Belmont Hall, Smyrna, where State Legislature met in 1777.

Maryland—A liquid amber from the grove of Francis Scott Key, author of the Star Spangled Banner.

New York—A white oak from the battle ground of Saratoga.

Virginia—A chestnut from the grave of Thomas Jefferson.

North Carolina—A hackberry from the battle ground of Guilford Court House.

South Carolina—A magnolia from Fort Moultrie, Sullivan's Island.

Georgia—A catalpa from Savannah.

Merion Chapter also sent historic earth from nearly every Revolutionary locality in or near Philadelphia, numbering about 100 packages.

Again a package of earth from Betsy Ross House traveled across the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Now my dear Mrs. Worrell, I am afraid I have made my letter very long but I felt sure you would be interested in what I told you about Betsy Ross matters, as they must be at the present time the special theme for your Chapter's discussion. I thank you, and the Flag House Chapter, for

the honor you conferred upon me by incorporating my former letter in your minutes. I shall always talk of the maker of the first American flag. It seems to me that it is very unkind, unpatriotic, and disloyal for any of our own citizens to cast doubt upon the story of Betsy Ross, as the maker of the flag, when the whole country has accepted it without a question. (No one from Massachusetts would do such a thing if Betsy had lived there.) What does it matter whether Washington called upon her at a certain date or not! What does it matter if the picture, as it appears on the "Betsy Ross Memorial Association's Certificate" is a "creation of the artist!" Nobody ever doubted that Washington prayed while at Valley Forge, even if the picture so familiar to us all was a "creation of the artist's mind." Nobody ever supposed that the details were exactly as the painting represented them. In those troublous times the newspaper photographer wasn't waiting with his camera to "snap" every pose, so that each detail could be perfect.

To my mind as to thousands of others, the fact remains unshaken, despite those who have tried to cast doubt upon it. The members of the Martha Williams Society D. A. R. (of which I have the honor to be president) sing a little song at each meeting, to the air of "Red, White and Blue." It begins:

"Betsy Ross lived on Arch street, near Second,

And her sewing was very, very fine,  
General Washington went down to see her,

To order a brand new flag, etc, etc.  
(Perhaps you know it, for it wasn't original with us.)

Each child loves the story and the song. I have taught them to cut the five-pointed star as "Betsy" cut it, and I would not, for a moment, have them

doubt that the first "Star Spangled Banner" was made by a young woman, here in our own Quaker City, the young gentlewoman called "Betsy Ross."

With kind regards to you and all your "daughters," I am

Cordially yours,

DORA HARVEY DEVELIN.  
(Formerly Munyan.)

Regent Merion Chapter D. A. R.

In bringing this address to a close I would like to refer to the results achieved by Mr. Charles W. Smith and the other gentlemen associated with him, and among whom were John Quincy Adams, Esq., Hon. Robert E. Patterson, Ex-Governor of Pennsylvania; Charles H. Weisberger; Edward Brooke, Esq., superintendent of public schools; Adam H. Fetteroff, president of Girard College; etc., etc., who saved the old flag house (239 Arch street) from destruction and make possible its appreciation by our countrymen and their descendants in the years to come. As time passes and the importance of the flag's birth place is realized more fully the reward so long in coming will be greater.

Would it not be well for each individual, as well as patriotic society to look through their old papers and if possible bring to light any data that may still be in existence adding additional strength to the history we already have.

In this connection I understand a certain patriotic society is contemplating offering prizes for any old data submitted to said society, bearing upon Betsy Ross and the making of our first flag.

I take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Susan M. Turner, and Major and Mrs. T. Worcester Worrell, of Frankford, Pa., Mr. Lloyd Balderston, Jr., of West Chester, Pa., (who has given me for the society the manuscript of his book before its publication); Dr. Rupert G.

Beale, of Germantown, Pa., (who has spent much time in procuring affidavits, etc., for me); Mr. Charles Wallington, of Camden, N. J.; Mr. Charles William Smith, of Philadelphia; Mr. and Mrs. David Newport and Miss Satterthwaite, of Abington, Pa.; Mrs. McCord Smith, of Germantown, Pa.; Mr. William M. Griscom, of Haverford, Pa., and others for the presentation to me of data and for various affidavits bearing on the subject of my address; considerable of which I have used.

I am pleased to note that some of the above are with us to-day and as many of them are descendants from Betsy Ross or collateral lines, it indicates the interest this family takes in their illustrious ancestress. Others would have liked to have been here but assured me the risk of inclement weather would be too great owing to their advanced years.

#### ADDENDUM.

The following letter was sent me with affidavits of seven great grand-nephews and nieces of Betsy Ross by Dr. Rupert Griscom Beale.

Phila, Jan. 15, 1909.

Mr. Oliver R. Parry,

My Dear Sir:—

Herewith I am forwarding you a paper, the affidavits of my aunts and uncles, who are great-grand-nephews and nieces of Betsy Ross, and grand-nieces and nephews of Margaret Donaldson Boggs an associate of Betsy Ross in the upholstering and flag-making business.

Betsy Ross' maiden name was Elizabeth Griscom. She was a daughter of Samuel and Rebecca James Griscom, persons of good standing and means. No doubt you are aware of the fact that Elizabeth Griscom learned the upholstering business before she married John Ross, an upholsterer, and being unusually intelligent and clever, she gained such an insight into the

business that she was able to continue it after the death of her husband, John Ross. Her second husband was Captain Joseph Ashburn, and after his death, she was married to John Claypoole, during all this time she carried on the business of upholstering and flag-making, which increased to large proportions.

In 1795 Margaret Donaldson Boggs, became a widow after which she resided with her aunt Elizabeth Claypoole (formerly Betsy Ross) these two ladies were associated in the upholstery business, for many years.

It may be of interest to note that Margaret Boggs lived to the advanced age of 100 years, 5 months and 2 days. She was born January 10, 1776 (just before the colonies declared their Independence) and she died during our Centennial celebration, June 12, 1876 retaining all her faculties to the time of her demise.

On June 3, 1870 Mrs. Boggs duly affirmed before a notary "That I have heard my aunt, Elizabeth Claypoole, say that she made the first United States flag, and that it was made on an order from General Washington."

Margaret Donaldson Boggs was an aunt to my grandmother, Louise Boggs Beale, and lived for over thirty years with my grandparents, Stephen Thomas Beale, M. D., D. D. S., and his wife Louise Boggs Beale. They and their children received directly from their aunt, Mrs. Boggs the history of the making of the first United States flag, as told to her by her Aunt Claypoole (Betsy Ross) I herewith forward to you the affidavits of the above mentioned surviving children of Dr. and Mrs. Beale, who well remember the statements of this remarkable old lady. I desire to call your attention to the fact that these statements coming from one actually associated in the flag-making business with Betsy Ross, and imparted by this associate (Mrs. Boggs) directly to her nephews

and nieces afford unquestionable proof that they are not falsified.

Very truly yours,

RUPERT GRISCOM BEALE.  
1116 Girard street, Phila., Pa.

January 18, 1909

Oliver Randolph Parry, Esq.,

Dear Sir:

In answer to your inquiry I believe the original tiling still remains beneath the mantel and on each side of the fire place in the "Betsy Ross Flag House" on Arch street. Those blue pictures of Bible subjects were there explained to me about Noah's ark, etc., when I was about four years old, visiting our relatives, with my grandmother's sister, Mrs. Margaret Donaldson Boggs, a niece of Mrs. Ross. I was never there again. It was then a private residence, not a store. Recently my sisters called at that house, but before they told how it looked, I described the tile fire place, and we are sure it is still the same. These tiles made an impression, because pictures always did, and after attending the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, as a student, I became an artist. When visiting with Aunt Boggs, on Front street, below Walnut, (the property running to Dock street) I saw ladies sewing American flags of bunting, about the time of the Mexican War. I remember the troops returning, the infantry parading down Walnut street, and on another afternoon the cavalry and artillery passed our house galloping.

Respectfully,  
JOSEPH B. BEALE.

43 Pastorius street,  
Germantown, Phila., Pa.

Philadelphia, January 16, 1909.

My dear Mr. Parry:

List showing relation of following persons to Betsy Ross mentioned in affidavits.

Rachel Fletcher, daughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Sophia B. Hildebrant, granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Mary Satterthwaite, granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Susan Satterthwaite, Newport, granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

William J. and George Canby, grandson of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Sarah M. Wilson, great-granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Lloyd Balderston, Jr., great-grandson of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Sophia Guthrie (Mrs.) great granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Gertrude Scott (Mrs. Charles) great-great-granddaughter of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Margaret Donaldson Boggs, niece of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Susan McCord Turner, grand-niece of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Margaret McCord Smith, grand-niece of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Joseph Boggs Beale, Albert B. Beale, Mr. Henry B. Beale, Daniel S. Beale, Louise B. Culver, Clara S. B. Broom, Emily, J. Beale, great-grand-nephews and nieces of Elizabeth Claypoole.

Clarissa Sidney Wilson, is the oldest daughter of Elizabeth and John Claypoole, but not the oldest daughter of all her daughters as there were two daughters by her former husband Capt. Joseph Ashburn.

I have also sent you an incomplete genealogical chart for the purpose of showing the descent of those who gave affidavits to the Betsy Ross history.

Very truly yours,  
RUPERT G. BEALE.

In a book entitled "The Stars and Stripes and other American Flags" by Peley D. Harrison, 1906, on page 61-62 we find the following:

"The credit of making the first flag containing the stars and stripes is universally given to Mrs. Betsy Ross, and the story of its making is somewhat

familiar to all. Betsy, or Elizabeth Griscom, was the fifth daughter of Samuel and Rebecca (James) Griscom, and was born January 1, 1752. She was married when quite young to a John Ross, son of the Reverend Arneas Ross, an Episcopal clergyman of New Castle, Delaware, whose brother, the Honorable George Ross, became one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. George Ross was interested in the furnishing of cannon balls, with perhaps other military stores, for the Colonial defence, and it was while on guard at night over these, with other young men, that the nephew, John Ross, received an injury from the effects of which he died in January, 1776.

"It was during her widowhood that Betsy Ross made the first stars and stripes. For a second husband she married Capt. Joseph Ashburn, who died a pensioner of war in the Mill Prison, England, and for a third, John Claypoole, who died August 3, 1817."

Does Col. Ross' interest appear in having his niece make the first flag, and furnish the stars and stripes as long as possible? Betsy's husband evidently was close to his uncle and in his employ from the above account!

In book by George Henry Preble, U. S. N. Entitled "Our Flag." Page 194. Mention is made as below.

"Philadelphia, June 3, 1777, Colonial Records, Vol. II., P. 212. The president laid before the council three strings of wampum which had been delivered to him some time before by Thomas Green, a nominal Indian of the nation, requesting that a flag of the United States might be delivered to him to take to the chiefs of the nation to be used by them for their security and protection, when they may have occasion to visit their brethren, and that his Excellency had referred him to Congress for an answer to his request."



Does this imply the stars and stripes as a national flag had already been adopted for some time, but not officially recorded, and this incident responsible for a hurried and tardy official record in the books of Congress in order to make legal the granting of this request?

Mention is made of "Reminiscence of Wilmington," in "Familiar Village Tales Ancient and New," by Elizabeth Montgomery, that the first American flag displayed at a foreign port was floated over the Brig Nancy, 1776, at St. Thomas, a neutral port, that Capt. Hugh Montgomery was the commander, and that the brig was chartered by Robert Morris, Financier of the Continental Congress, and which set sail in 1775, etc., etc. This point has been taken exception to by many historians for various reasons, but the writer thinks it is not unlikely, that Robert Morris did display the stars and stripes, on some vessel in which he was interested, either in late 1776 or shortly after, whatever the date was, that Betsy Ross made the flag of stars and stripes subsequently adopted, and it no doubt was to one of his vessels, reference is made in one of the affidavits, "that the flag was unfurled from the mast of a vessel of one of the committee."

Note: The below letter is also of interest as indicating the view held by the United States Government authorities in the flag matter:

NAVY DEPARTMENT  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON.

January 22, 1909.

Dear Sir:—

In response to your request of the 20th instant for certain historical data, I take pleasure in sending the accompanying information, which I hope may be what you desire.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) H. L. SATTERLEE,  
Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Charles William Smith,  
Union League Club,  
Philadelphia.

(3) In what year and month and day was the American flag of thirteen stars and thirteen stripes adopted by the United States Congress (copy of same).

Statutory beginning June 14, 1777, as follows: "Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." An illustration of this flag may be found on p. 58 of "The Stars and Stripes" by P. D. Harrison.

(4) From the best record and information you have, who made this flag?

Mrs. Betsy Ross, of Philadelphia.

(5) In what State, County, City, was it made?  
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Penna.

(6) The number of the dwelling and street?

No. 239 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Penna.

(7) Has the government the name of the first vessel that hoisted this flag, merchant or war, and the date as chronicled?

There is no official record to show on what vessel the stars and stripes were first raised. Many historians state that the first stars and stripes was hoisted by John Paul Jones on the RANGER, July 4, 1777, at Portsmouth, N. H., while others do not mention any date, but record the incident.

C. M. SMITH COAL & COKE CO.  
Land Title Building,  
Philadelphia, Jan. 11, 1909.

Friend Parry:

In answer to inquiry:

I was born in that good old State Connecticut, whose sons revere the memory of those heroes who saved this country. In Yale University town,

New Haven, I early learned the lesson of Patriotism.

In my feeble efforts to prevent the old home of Betsy Ross, Birthplace of the American Flag from obliteration, forever, I simply did what any one would have done who had not been associated with patriotic societies, and descendants of heroes and patriots. By accident I learned in 1892 that in two weeks the house was to be torn down for an intended manufacturing site. I was fortunate enough to prevent the sale, and turn the wheels in the right direction, which they never turned back. It cost me some time and expense, my return has not been a pecuniary one, but satisfaction in the remembrances of the applicable words of the immortal Lincoln:

"Saved by the people, For the people, that it do not perish from the face of the earth."

It was imperative to me that I got true information about who was Betsy Ross. Did she make the first American Flag of thirteen stars and stripes adopted by the United States Government, January 14, 1777? And her history. And was the house now standing, No. 239 Arch Street, the same in which she resided and made the flag?

The above searching inquiries I

had to obtain before I put my name to the story of the day. It was no child's play. I had obstacles to overcome, difficulties to meet. I threshed out all the information, called to my aid the grandchildren then living, whose story as told to me then, is as true to-day.

I could easily write a book on the data secured on getting at the truth about Our Flag and its maker. I am glad that some of the descendants are vindicating the story of those of their kin who have gone before, and will refute the mis-statements, and vaporings of a recent publication.

"Truth is mighty and will prevail."

Very truly,

(Sgd.) CHARLES M. SMITH.

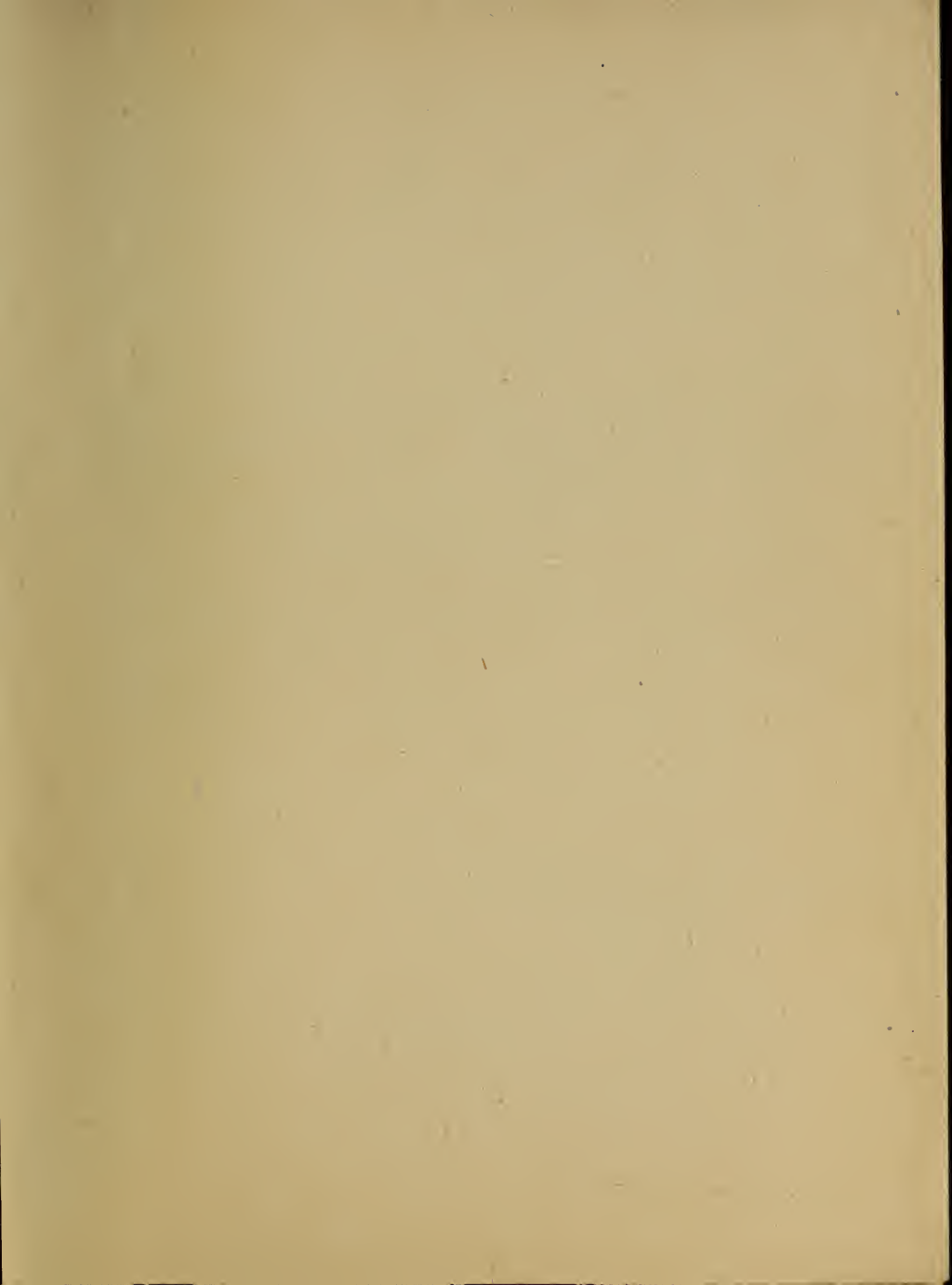
P. S. This reference to "some of her descendants" applies to the book of Mr. Lloyd Balderston, Jr., now in the hands of the publishers, and in no way to the author of this address who is not related to or connected with any of those concerned and is an entirely disinterested party except from historical and patriotic motives.

OLIVER RANDOLPH PARRY,  
January 19, 1909.















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